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ABSTRACT

Marketing can solve problems postsecondary vocational educators face related to enrollment, professional contribution, image, and program quality. Postsecondary vocational education should be aggressively marketed because of its expanding growth and mission. Postsecondary institutions are using various marketing strategies, including activities related to research, promotion, planning, client needs, and availability/accessibility. However, marketing involves more than just public relations and image development. Substantive changes imply modifications in programs, support services, administration, and delivery methods. The procedure for integrating marketing in a postsecondary institution begins with activities focusing on internal marketing, structure, and management support. An institution must perform internal marketing to ensure that its members support the marketing process. Key components of internal marketing are the following: quality and commitment; the role of management; the organizational personality of "corporate culture"; selection, orientation, and reorientation; training; and communications. The integration of marketing must be performed in a structured fashion with management support. Two guest contributors to this monograph are Thomas J. Walker and Deede Sharpe, writing respectively on marketing's role in promoting the value of vocational-education and the function of internal marketing. (28 references) (YLB)

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The Integration of Marketing in Post-Secondary Vocational Education

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THE INTEGRATION OF MARKETING IN POST-SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

> "As time passes, schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions increasingly recognize that they face marketing problems. Declines in prospective students, enrollment, donations, and other resources in the face of mounting costs remind them of their dependence on the market place they serve."
>
> (Kotler and Fox, 1985)

This statement reflects the increasing role marketing is performing in the management and delivery of education in America. Similar to the financial services and health care industries, education has found itself in the peculiar situation of facing mounting competition while its external environment changes drastically. This situation has quickly brought the marketing process to the forefront of education's response to its dynamic situation. The resulting marketing awareness and practice have encouraged many educators to embrace marketing as a solution to problems related to enrollment, contributions, image and program quality. Although marketing can address these concerns and can be of great help in solving these problems, marketing should not be viewed as the sole solution. Many organizations have learned marketing cannot sell an inferior product. Educational leaders, in particular, must understand that superior program quality is essential when they are marketing a professional service such as education. This monograph is devoted to exploring the role of marketing in educational institutions. Specifically, the focus is on marketing as it is and can be practiced in the delivery of vocational-technical education at the post-secondary level.

PURPOSES

This monograph is organized around four primary purposes. First, an examination of the need for marketing in post-secondary vocational education is included. Numerous factors indicate marketing is an essential tool for educational leaders to utilize. A guest contributor to the monograph provides insight into reasons why vocational education, as an educational offering, needs to be marketed. Second, this monograph reviews various marketing strategies being used in post-secondary vocational institutions in the United States. Many institutions have considerably expanded their marketing efforts in the last few years and can provide successful examples for others to follow. A third purpose of the monograph is to present conclusions regarding the status of marketing as it is being practiced in post-secondary vocational institutions. It is intended that these conclusions will serve as a planning basis for those wishing to initiate or expand the role of marketing in their systems or institutions. Finally, information is presented concerning the specific role marketing can perform for postsecondary vocational education. This information can be used as it appears or can be modified to meet the developing needs of practitioners. A second guest contributor, Ms. Deede Sharpe, adds to the comprehensive nature of this section.

WHY *MARKET* POST-SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION?

POST-secondary vocational education, like other components of education, is undergoing considerable change. Inherent in this change is the desire by vocational education leaders to be recognized for the contribution they make to a technological society and to be included in the planning and reform of education. Marketing certainly has an important role to perform in meeting this challenge. However, vocational education leaders must first realize why it is important to engage in marketing activities.

Vocational education has traditionally been thought to suffer from an image problem. In Georgia for example, an extensive study entitled The Image of Vocational Education in Georgia(1986) was initiated because "there has been a persistent concern about the image of vocational education in Georgia." (State Board for Post-Secondary Vocational Education, Georgia Vocational Association and The Georgia Council on Vocational Education, 1986) Also, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education has conducted a number of studies related to the image of vocational education, the most recent being conducted for the South Dakota Council on Vocational Education. (The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1987) The continuing efforts of vocational education leaders to assess the image of vocational education are an indication of the profession's commitment to an improved understanding of vocational education. An important aspect of this commitment is an emphasis on integrating the marketing process into institutions and agencies providing vocational education.

As is evident by the extensive number of educational institutions engaged in marketing activities, marketing is a timely subject for education to embrace. However, post-secondary vocational education seems to have, as indicated by the extent of marketing activity reported in the literature, more work to do in marketing than do colleges and universities. Leaders in post-secondary vocational education need to expedite their planning for the marketing of vocational education because of the rapid changes occurring in technology, society and the work place.

To quote Deede Sharpe: "Who needs vocational education? And why? The answers to these questions are multiplying. Thanks to the expansion of the service industry, the growth of high technology, the oversupply of liberal arts graduates, the changing economics of work in America and the changing demographics of the American labor force, more and more Americans need marketable skills taught through vocational education." (Sharpe, 1986) The changing nature of America and its work force indicate that vocational education in general ought to engage in a more active role in the overall education of American youth and adults. However, the starting point of an increasing role for vocational education begins with the value placed on vocational education by society and legislative leaders. Dr. Thomas J. Walker of Temple University addresses the perceived value society assigns to vocational education and the implications of this assignment in the following essay.

PROMOTING THE VALUE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

by Thomas J. Walker, Temple University

General perceptions of the value of vocational education as a program for helping all Americans are ambiguous. If this were not the case, we should expect to see vocational education among the recommendations for improvement associated with the education reform movement now underway. After all, nearly 60 percent of the high school graduating cohort are non-college-bound and hoping to become employed directly after graduation (Cardoza, 1986). Or would the Washington administration be proposing to eliminate federal funding for vocational education and using as a rationale that the federal government should only retain programs "that enhance educational opportunities for the poor, the disadvantaged, the handicapped, and children of limited English speaking ability; benefit children at the elementary and secondary level; improve the quality of American education; and teach basic academic and literacy skills" (B. M. Carnes, Deputy Under Secretary, U.S. Department of Education, personal communication, March, 1987)? Isn't 57 percent of the state grant under the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act intended to benefit special populations?

At the same time, there are over a decade's worth of Gallup Polls documenting the general public's regard for more, not less, occupational experiences in our schools. And, continued passage of federal legislation supporting vocational education certainly has to be interpreted as broad-based enthusiasm for the basic program. To what, then, can we attribute the ambiguity?

One possible explanation, and this is hardly an original insight, has been our (i.e., vocational education's) inability to dispel persistent stereotypes about vocational education, especially among general education decision makers. Stereotypes, for example, that inaccurately portray vocational education as narrow skill training incapable of imparting lifelong learning skills requisite for life's transitions and the workplace of the future. As a consequence, vocational education has become, at best, selectively valued and, at worse, inappropriately valued by a substantial and influential segment of society.

The need to convince certain publics of the value added to the American way of life by vocational education is not a new one. What is disturbing, however, is that we have not been more successful in our efforts. Indeed, progress that we thought we were making in this area but in reality were not, probably was masked for the past several decades by changes in federal legislation and the sheer numbers of students moving through our schools. A declining population of young people has not only exposed this phenomenon, but has also exacerbated it. The question we need to ask ourselves now is: Can an appropriate valuing for vocational education be achieved and can marketing perform a role in realizing this goal?

Begin With Marketing

For myths about vocational education to be dispelled and an appropriate valuing achieved we in vocational education must start with marketing. Marketing must be conceived as a program and implemented systematically throughout all institutions and at all levels comprising the vocational education spectrum (e.g., secondary through post-secondary and at local, state, and national levels). The approach must go far beyond public relations and activities designed merely to inform potential consumers. Marketing must pervade an institution by engaging the support of all vocational education personnel, professional and classified, in considering the needs of students, parents, business and industry. Marketing in this sense would require the attention of an effective leader but, at the same time, be viewed as an institutional process rather than the sole responsibility of any one person.

The approach being recommended here would present vocational education as a "value added" construct and have provisions for targeting specific publics such as general education decision makers. It would also incorporate the work of Rupert N. Evans,

recently retired professor emeritus from the University of Illinois. Evans (1982) after examining discrepancies between measured outcomes of vocational education and public acceptance of vocational education recommended changes in the methods used to evaluate the basic program. Evans observed that most evaluations of vocational education "concentrated on the effects of vocational education on individuals, while neglecting its effects on institutions and society" (p. 4). Evans recommended an expanded evaluation systems to accommodate the multiplicity of goals of vocational education (See Figure 1).

Collecting information from all of the cells in the Evans matrix and incorporating it into a comprehensive marketing plan can help create a more accurate representation of the value added to society through vocational education. Educational decision makers need to identify this information, gather it and integrate it with their marketing efforts to insure that appropriate publics are fully informed of the contribution of vocational education.

Beyond Marketing

The best empirical evidence from perceptual psychology (albeit oversimplified as stated here) demonstrates clearly and convincingly that we become what we perceive. As important as a systematic marketing approach might be, it will not, in and of itself, change public perceptions, at least in the short run. In the final analysis, it is we and our programs that will determine how vocational education will be viewed. When the general public or segments therein are asked what the purpose of vocational education is, they report what they have seen or come to know. It's extremely simple: to become associated with a particular purpose or function we must be seen performing those functions with which it is we wish to be associated. As a result we must be positioning our programs to deal with the technological, demographic, and economic challenges that confront us and appear to be with us well into the next century.

Some points for us to consider as we integrate marketing are discussed here. Vocational education leaders are in the position to influence the nature of vocational education in the future by the decisions they make and/or influence in the following areas:

- The problem of balancing the needs and interests of the declining number of students in the age range traditionally served by vocational education with the needs and interests of the growing number of older Americans who need retraining and upgrading. What adjustments will be needed to accommodate the mix? Are they underway?

- The fact that young workers are becoming a scarce resource in America while at the same time there is a rapid increase in the number of minorities among the youth population, many of whom will need special support services to be successful. Harold Hodgkinson (1985) points

Figure 1. Relationships among outcomes of vocational education.

	Labor Market related Outcomes	Education related Outcomes
Individual Outcomes	A	B
Institutional Outcomes	C	D
Societal Outcomes	E	F

out that minority numbers "are now so large that if they do not succeed, all of us will have diminished futures" (p. 18). Are our facilities, programs, and equipment geared to the needs of special groups and are our teachers specifically trained to teach particular populations?

- In response to foreign competition, new technology, divestiture, deregulations, demographics of an older work force, and a volatile economy, there has been a new focus on training and retraining by corporations, labor unions, and legislators. Consequently, Americans are exercising educational options along a continuum of their working lives. Can our vocational education institutions and programs provide the services and flexibility needed to accommodate such patterns? Will they?

- Half of all U.S. mothers with children under the age of one are now in the work force. Additionally, between now and 1990, two thirds of the entrants into the labor force will be women. As working mothers exercise education and retraining options, day care needs for children will have to be considered. Can vocational education institutions/programs accept this challenge as an opportunity rather than a burden? What will the message be that we communicate to the public?

- Demographic, technological, and economic challenges will require substantial changes in institutional and classroom / laboratory organization as well as in teaching methods. Flexible and personalized instruction in institutions that are efficiently used, perhaps year round, by teachers who are professionally and technically current can only build public support. Is this the norm?

Vocational education will not endure simply because we wish it or speak it. Resources and public support must be actively won and this can only be assured through a successful response to challenges like those presented above. Marketing these successes in a purposeful and systematic way can then help to dispel myths and create an appropriate valuing for vocational education.

(Dr. Walker's comments were written specifically for this publication.)

Why Market Post-Secondary Vocational Education?

As Dr. Walker's essay indicates, vocational education in general faces a considerable challenge in meeting the technical training needs of a dynamic society. An essential component of this challenge is and will continue to be vocational education offerings at the post-secondary level. Integrated with this challenge are the fundamental questions of why and how vocational education should be marketed at the post-secondary level. The main indicators of why post-secondary vocational education should be aggressively marketed are the expanding growth and mission it involves.

The Growth of Post-Secondary Vocational Education

Post-secondary vocational education has traditionally been offered through technical institutes and community colleges. Both institutions have experienced considerable growth since World War II for a variety of reasons and represent a primary method for delivering vocational training. Certainly for adult learners and retraining efforts, these institutions are the primary providers.

The growth of vocational education at the post-secondary level can be traced to four major factors. Because each factor is constantly changing, educational leaders must be alert to their external environment.

The increasing number of older American workers has been well documented in many journals and reports. The aging of the work force is driven by a number of socioeconomic factors such as the increasing number of "baby-boomers" entering middle age, the declining high school age group as a result of zero population growth occurring in the 1970's, and the increasing number of women entering the work force. In fact, 75 per cent of those who will be employed in the year 2001 are already working adults. (Garrison, 86-87) Since post-secondary institutions are the main providers of vocational education to adults, it is not surprising that post-secondary vocational education is growing.

A second factor leading to the growth of vocational education at the post-secondary level is the new markets that look to post-secondary vocational education for training. The federal government, for example, has supported training programs such as Manpower, CETA, and JPTA which look to post-secondary institutions for training. Also, special needs populations frequently look to post-secondary institutes for training. Labor Secretary William Brock, for example, cites "minorities, disadvantaged youth, immigrants and women to be special populations that will require considerable training toward the year 2000."(Brock, 1987)

In addition to the special populations mentioned by Secretary Brock, business and industry (particularly small business) represent a growing, special population for postsecondary vocational educators. Business and industry have supported training efforts extensively in the past but are instituting training at a rapid pace to keep up with changing technology and workers. For example, a Carnegie Foundation report in 1985 revealed that business and industry spent approximately $40 billion on training about 10 million employees on levels from basic skills to post-doctoral education. (Boyer, 1986) Post-secondary vocational education has an important role to perform as a collaborator with business and industry in delivering education to the currently employed.

"We know that the average worker changes occupations three times and changes jobs 6-8 times during the course of a career" (Garrison, 86-87). This statement relates to the third factor encouraging the growth of vocational education in post-secondary institutions. Because of changing technology and the makeup of the work force, the needs for retraining appear endless. Don Garrison of Tri-County Technical College in Pendleton, South Carolina expressed the magnitude of retraining needs:

"We must keep our own colleges current with the technology, then transfer that brainpower to the

businesses and industries we serve, and that brainpower is advancing at a boggling rate. It's no wonder that technology is advancing so fast, ninety percent of the scientists and engineers who ever lived are alive and at work today."

(Garrison, 86-87)

Secretary Brock reemphasizes Dr. Garrison's point that retraining will be an essential ingredient in training offered to business in his comment: "Training and retraining are going to become a part of every worker's life and any firm that does not participate is going to be, in my judgement, in jeopardy." (Brock, p.26) Clearly, post-secondary vocational education is and must continue to be a part of this growing trend toward retraining.

A final factor indicating marketing and post-secondary vocational education need to work more closely together is the increasing popularity of the Associate Degree in occupational technical subjects. For example, from 1973-74 to 1980-81, occupational degrees expanded 45.4 percent while arts and science degrees decreased by 5.4 percent. (Feldman, 1985) The increasing trend toward completing a more comprehensive, two-year degree reflects a need on the part of occupational students to receive general education in addition to technical training.

A strong case can be made for marketing post-secondary vocational education at the present time. First, an extensive training and retraining need exists in our rapidly changing technological society. Also, the bulk of the training and certainly the retraining will be with an aging work force which will look to post-secondary institutions for their educational needs. Finally, a dramatic increase in the numbers of students in special populations, particularly in the 15-19 age group, indicates that low-cost, vocationally oriented education may be necessary to meet the training needs of a larger segment of the population. These factors, when coupled with the cloudy often misunderstood mission and image of vocational education in general (as Dr. Walker points out), indicate a void exists between a need and the primary means of satisfying the need. The marketing process can perform a critical role in bringing the supply source and the needs closer together.

THE MISSION OF POST-SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The growth of post-secondary vocational education indicates its mission continues to evolve based on the occupational training needs of society. Presently, the primary mission of vocational education as practiced in the post-secondary institution is expanding into one of increased economic development. As our economy continues toward a service orientation, post-secondary vocational education will be called upon to provide the skill training needed for the service economy. It is estimated that 90 percent of the new jobs through 1995 will be in the service area. (Brock, 1986) Secretary Brock concludes the predominant number of these jobs will require post-secondary skill training. (Brock, 1986) If we are to meet this increasing training demand, post-secondary institutions must expand their mission to address an inevitable skill shortage.

CURRENT PRACTICES IN MARKETING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

The practice of marketing in vocational education at all levels is rather recent. Since 1983, the number of institutions utilizing marketing activities has increased considerably. Interestingly, many institutions have engaged in marketing related activities for decades although they rarely realized it. Student recruitment, for example, is very much a marketing activity, and an admissions office performs many marketing functions. However, marketing related activities have typically been performed in an unstructured, unplanned manner. Literature reviews support the conclusion that post-secondary institutions, like their counterparts at secondary and collegiate levels, need to approach marketing as an inte-

grated, programmatic activity. Literature reviews also indicate that the majority of the marketing activity in post-secondary institutions focuses on the public relations component of marketing. This narrow view of the marketing process indicates that current practitioners may not be fully aware of what marketing is and what marketing can do for post-secondary vocational education. To explore current marketing practices, the following section presents marketing activities organized according to 1) research, 2) promotion, 3) planning, 4) client needs, and 5) availability/accessibility activities.

Research

Marketing research is an essential tool for directing marketers toward two critical questions: 1) Who is our customer, and 2) What are the most effective marketing methods to meet the needs of our customer? Designing research projects to gather information to answer these questions is conducted either inhouse by an appropriate educational agency or is subcontracted to a research firm. In either case, educational marketers must have valid information on which to base marketing decisions. Although specific marketing research is limited in post-secondary vocational education, the following samples indicate the nature and scope of market research that can be conducted.

A 1982 survey of marketing and marketing research activities at urban, two- and four-year institutions revealed:

-The key factor affecting enrollment in two year institutions were increased competition and tighter economic conditions.

-Market research at two-year institutions emphasized employer needs and the needs of special people.

-Greater emphasis on needs assessment and program development was placed at the two-year institutions.

-Responsibility for marketing was likely to be with thepublic relations office in two-year institutions.

-Two-year institutions were likely to have a more articulate marketing plan than four-year institutions.

(Smith, et.al. 1982)

South Carolina also conducted marketing research in 1981 to determine the purposes, programs and delivery methods of its statewide technical college network. The results of 3,368 telephone surveys with adults revealed:

- The most visible programs were mechanics, welding, nursing, business and computer programming.
- 52 percent of respondents said they would take a technical college course.
- 21 percent of respondents had been a technical college student.
- 48 percent received information about technical colleges from brochures, friends, or direct mail.

(*TEC Marketing Survey*, 1983).

A third example of marketing research for post-secondary vocational education was conducted in 1986 to assess public relations methods used to recruit adults into vocational programs in West Virginia. Four surveys completed by administrators, counselors, teachers and students revealed:

-Newspaper advertiaements and articles were used most frequently.

-20 percent of students reported former students had influenced the decision to enroll in vocational education.

-18 percent of students enrolled because of newspaper advertising.

-Despite the fact that alumni are the best recruiters , few schools had alumni associations.

(McMullen, 1986)

The previous three examples represent a sampling of the practices occurring in two-year institutions regarding marketing research. Although marketing research is rather limited for vocational education at the post-secondary level, market research activity should increase as educational leaders apply the marketing process to education.

PROMOTION

The promotional aspect of the marketing process consists of personal selling, advertising, sales promotion, and publicity/public relations. Personal selling involves direct promotional contact between people, while advertising is impersonal through media such as radio, newspapers, and outdoor boards. Publ icity/ publ ic relations relate to long term, image development while sales promotion focuses on activities such as contests, coupons, and special sales to generate short-term results. Although each aspect has an important role to perform, particularly personal selling, promotion of post-secondary vocational education has mainly focused on publicity/public relations as indicated by the popularity of image studies. The following samples of promotion-related activities support this point.

Communication by Design: A Public Relations Handbook was developed in 1983 to assist educational planners in developing news releases and brochures, conducting special events such as open houses, and offering suggestions about use of public service announcements. (Communications by Design: A Public Relations Handbook, 1983)

In 1984, A Recruitment Package for Post-Secondary Vocational Educationwas published by the Florida State Department of Education. The recruitment package contains seven instructional units which focus on the recruitment effort. A "How To" guide is also included which emphasizes implementing the recruitment effort. Finally, examples of artwork and advertising copy from around the United States are included. Appendices include sample newspaper ar ticles, radio spots, media relations, and a discussion of working with advertising agencies. (Waltz et. al., 1985)

The Arkansas State Department of Education also developed a promotional package for vocational education in 1984.This manual focused on promoting individual programs and is organized into five sections: 1) internal network the school, 2) external network = community support systems, 3) advisory board committees, 4) fairs, booths, and exhibits, and 5) media coverage. The manual includes specific suggestions for putting promotion into practice. (Reyes, 1984)

PLANNING

Marketing and planning must be coordinated in an educational institution as they are in product and service organizations. The two functions are interdependent and must be organized so there is frequent communication and interaction between them. As marketing evolves in post-secondary institutions, the need for integration will be obvious. The followingthree examples are indicative of the type of integration needed between marketing and planning.

The Chattanooga State Technical Community College developed a comprehensive marketing plan in 1981. The plan consists of six sections beginning with establishing an overall image. Other sections focus on marketing specific college programs and services such as placement and continuing education. The plan is designed to integrate planning and marketing by providing the following information in each of the six sections:

1) Community perception and awareness including specific data on offerings, funding sources, and enrollments

2) Analysis of student options offered by other area institutions

3) Goals of the marketing effort

4) Research studies conducted or in progress

5) Identification of target audiences

6) Specific marketing strategies

The plan also spells out who is responsible for implementing specific marketing activities and the time frame for completion. (Hoppe and Haddock,1981)

In 1984, the Massachusetts State Department of Education developed a two-volume guide to provide vocational educators with tools for planning and implementing recruiting strategies. The guide offers chapters on the following topics:

1) Recruiting Priority Population Students

2) The Changing Role of Recruitment in Vocational Education

3) Recruitment Practices That Work

4) Organizing and Implementing Recruitment Programs

5) Reaching Out To The Public

The guide concludes with a bibliography focusing on recruitment of students to nontraditional programs and special populations. (McGrath and Pekelo-Bielen, 1984)

A "how to" marketing book was also developed in 1984 by the West Virginia Research and Training Center. This document focused specifically on planning the marketing effort in vocational rehabilitation agencies. The report is organized into two major areas, a conceptual framework for marketing and a guideline for developing a marketing plan. Major topics covered in each area are as follows:

Conceptual framework - product definitions, target group definition, differential needs identifications, consumer behavior analysis, differential advantages, integrated marketing planning, multiple marketing tools, marketing feedback, and marketing audits.

Developing a marketing plan -marketing environment, strategy, organization, assessing demand, gathering information, sorting out markets, altering and distributing products, keeping track of costs, and evaluating a vocational rehabilitation program.

This marketing plan most closely parallels those generally found in profit-making ventures and in marketing textbook theory. (Spann, 1984)

Client Needs

The client in vocational education can be anyone, including society, that uses and benefits from vocational education offered at the post-secondary level. For example, parents, employers, and a local community are clients for vocational education. Also, students are perhaps the largest, most important client,group marketers of post-secondary vocational education need to consider if they intend to be truly marketing oriented. Marketers must have a keen sense of who their clients are, how they are changing, and the needs they wish vocational education to satisfy. A clear understanding of clients and their needs is the initial step in marketing vocational education for postsecondary students. The following examples represent samples of the type of demographic and psychographic information marketers need to know about their clients.

A 1986 review of the major research reports conducted on post-secondary vocational educa-tion students provides insight into who the vocational education student is and the educational needs of this student. For example, the review points out:

- Female students in vocational programs have been shown to have, on the average, higher academic and socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds than male students.
- Younger students often study full-time planning to obtain skills to enter the job market directly.
-Older students study part-time to update job skills in present occupations or make a midlife career change.
- Significant numbers of students who matricu

late in vocational programs eventually switch to and complete the transfer curriculum.

A summary statement from the review provides an interesting glimpse of current post-secondary vocational education students:

"Today's vocational students bring a wide variety of abilities, backgrounds and objectives to their programs of study. There is also evidence that student characteristics vary significantly from occupational program to occupational program and that it is misleading to speak of vocational students as uniformly distinct from students in the transfer curriculum. Vocational programs like baccalaureate transfer courses, serve a variety of students and meet a variety of educational needs." (Palmer, 1986)

ACCESSIBILITY / AVAILABILITY

An essential ingredient in marketing any product or service is to have the offering conveniently available for the customer/client. For vocational education, availability/ accessibility has a dual purpose. First, it relates to modifying programs so they are available to meet student needs. Evening courses, weekend courses, on-site training, and early morning offerings are all designed to accommodate the student's needs for availability. This basic marketing principle of being available according to the client's needs has traditionally been a main component of post-secondary vocational education. Second, availability also has an accessibility component that encourages planners to make vocational education accessible to as many student populations as possible. In recent years, special student populations such as minorities, unemployed, incarcerated, and handicapped students have looked to post-secondary institutions for vocational education programming.

The following examples relate to methods in which vocational education at the post-secondary is modified (and marketed)to make itself more available and accessible to students.

The Texas Education Agency sponsored the development of a manual to assist post-secondary vocational educators in meeting the needs of students preparing for careers in nontraditional occupations. Chapters assist educators in modifying vocational counseling, publicity efforts, and outreach activities to meet the needs of this student segment. (Dahlberg, 1985) A second example of how vocational education can be packaged to be more accessible to special populations is a handbook designed to recruit women into nontraditional occupations (NTO). The handbook focuses on marketing strategies such as:

- Arranging upgrading courses for women
- Modifying career exploration techniques
- Occupational counseling
- Support services to deal with home and school obstacles
- Support for dealing with opposition to NTO training
- Job placement and follow-up services

(Shuchat, et.al., 1982)

The preceding discussion and examples indicate that some marketing thinking is currently being practiced at post-secondary vocational education institutions. However, these institutions have considerable work to do if they are to meet the tremendous needs in this area of education. Marketing can assist vocational education leaders as they modify their programs, reach out to new and emerging student populations, and inform the general public of the essential service vocational education provides society and its members.

INTEGRATING MARKETING IN THE POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION

"The challenge now (related to the image of vocational education) is to identify specific strategies, focusing on both substantive changes as well as public relations, through which that image can be enhanced." (The Image of Vocational Education in Georgia p.10) This statement has considerable impli-

cation for marketing post-secondary vocational education because it implies two important points. First, marketing is more involved than just public relations and image development. Second, substantive changes imply modifications in programs, support services, administration, and delivery methods. In effect, modifications in all aspects of providing post-secondary vocational education must be initiated as the marketing process is integrated. Anything short of a full-scale commitment to marketing is likely to result in "high-gloss" public relations tactics that contribute little to the long-term relationship post-secondary vocational education can establish with society.

The procedure for integrating marketing in a postsecondary institution begins with activities focusing on internal marketing, structure, and management support. Each activity and an explanation of it indicate that integrating marketing in an educational setting requires commitment, support, and patience. The foundation for this challenge rests with the internal marketing an institution must perform to insure that its members support the marketing process. Ms. Deede Sharpe, a marketing and education consultant, provides an in-depth examination of this critical aspect of integrating marketing.

INTERNAL MARKETING: DEVELOPING A CONSISTENT IMAGE FOR POST-SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

By Deede Sharpe, Sharpe Enterprises

Previous information focuses on what the literature says about marketing strategies and planning, and the implications for vocational education. The naysayers (at least one per crowd) point out that Madison Avenue techniques will not work for vocational education because vocational education, unlike industry, does not produce a tangible product, such as the Ford Escort, Ivory soap or Coca-Cola. A part of that observation is absolutely accurate.

Vocational education itself is not a product. Vocational education does produce employable workers with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to compete successfully in the job market. Those workers, those products, however, are a result of a service. Vocational education is a service performed on a day-to-day basis by vocational professionals, and good service industries can be and are successfully marketed.

The Service Industry's Marketing Begins Internally

The difference between marketing products and services is in the marketing emphasis. The successful service industries consider one of their primary audiences to be their own employees - the people who deliver the service. They reason that if people on the front line are sold on the company, its mission and its successes, then they will deliver higher quality service and market the company at the same time.

This strategy seems even more logical when you consider the nature of the service industry:

1. Its product is intangible - you cannot see or touch it.

2. Its image results primarily from the interaction between the consumer and the front line deliv erer of services.

3. Its image is "on the line" every time a consumer interacts with any representative of the agency.

All of which leads to the conclusion that any external marketing of a service industry, i.e., billboards, catchy slogans, slick advertisements, is premature if the internal audience is not sold first. When the image depends on the employees rather than the product, then employees must be a primary target market.

Self Perception Equals Public Image

"We have met the enemy, and he is us, " to quote that eminent American philosopher Pogo, as created by Walt Kelly. Too often that phrase describes a problem that is key to the image of vocational education. Vocational educators who think of themselves as over-worked, unappreciated and as second-class citizens are surprised to discover that is how they are perceived and treated. In order to incur the respect and support they so rightly deserve, vocational educators must feel and project pride, confidence, and knowledge in the accomplishments and mission of vocational education in general and their specific programs in particular.

Vocational educators are the image of vocational education. Their knowledge of the systems's progress and the attitudes they project to the public are stronger than any purchased message. In order for a vocational education marketing campaign to be successful, the people who deliver the service must speak knowledgeably, enthusiastically and with pride about their goals and achievements. Any external marketing plan must be supported and accompanied by an internal, image building campaign.

Internal marketing techniques and strategies are

interwoven throughout an operation and are an integral part of the management style. A few key components of internal marketing that will be discussed here are quality and commitment; the role of management; the organizational personality of "corporate culture;" selection, orientation and reorientation; training and communications.

Quality And Commitment Comes First

Any organization, to have a positive image, must begin with quality ... quality service or quality product. Marketing cannot sell inferior goods or services, or even superior goods and services that no one wants or needs. So the first step in any image building effort is to study your programs honestly and carefully. What is working well? What needs help? What plan will help fix the weak spots and by when?

All marketing success hinges on quality, but internal marketing is particularly vulnerable to a campaign that bypasses program assessment. The employees know full well what conditions really are, and an internal image building campaign with false or inflated claims can be more detrimental to morale than no campaign at all. Peter Reynolds, in his article "Imposing a Corporate Culture," in the March (1987) issue of Psychology Today, documents the demise of hi-tech industry that implemented an internal marketing plan based on values that were being violated daily by management and operations. (Reynolds, 1987) An honest look at what you are doing, how well it is working and what your plans are for shoring up the weak spots is an essential first step in image building.

The other key component, in addition to quality, is commitment. Internal marketing is not something you do when time and budget allow, and not something that is the sole responsibility of the personnel office. Internal marketing must have the long-range commitment of management and must become a part of everyone's on-going management style if it is to succeed throughout the organization.

Defining the Corporate Culture

Given a quality operation and commitment from management, where do you begin in building an internal marketing plan?

If you want people to project a positive image, you must first work together to define exactly what that image is, not in vague understandings, but in specific values, behaviors, mission statement and operational slogans. This set of descriptive characteristics of the organization is being referred to, in current business literature, as "corporate culture." The author prefers the term "organizational personality," because the personality of the organization, like the personality of the individual, is dynamic, influenced by external forces, and can be motivated positively by positive modification techniques, such as goal setting and positive reinforcement.

By any name, an organization, like an individual, has its own set of values, norms, and characteristics by which it can be distinguished from other organizations or individuals. By shaping a positive structure for this phenomenon, the organization can greatly influence how employees feel about the organization. Deal and Kennedy, in the book Corporate Cultures, discovered that only eighteen companies of the nearly eighty companies they studied had clearly stated, widely understood goals and beliefs. " ...all were uniformly outstanding performers; we could find no correlations of any relevance among the other companies - some did okay, some poorly, most had their ups and downs. We characterized the consistently high performers as strong culture companies."(Deal and Kennedy, 1982)

In addition to the companies surveyed by Deal and Kennedy some of the nation's most respected leaders in the service industry, including Walt Disney World Co., Red Lobster Inns, and Delta Airlines, have clearly defined who they are and what values they represent both for their employees and for their customers. Deal and Kennedy go on to say that "often companies succeed because their employees can identify, embrace, and act on the values of the organization." (Deal and Kennedy, 1982)

So, before you can look for strategies to communicate your image, you need to define the organizational personality, comprised of, in addition to other elements, the following:

1. Values. What do we want people to think of us? What 3-5 words would we have people use when they describe us? What values do we want to live by?

2. Service Focus. Who are your audiences, in priority order? For whom does the organization exist?

3. Mission Statement. Why are we in business? What do we come to work each day to do? What is our mission?

4. Slogan or Slogans. What easy-to-remember phrase or phrases will serve as a reminder of the values and mission statement?

5. Operational Guidelines. If we really mean all of the above, what does that imply for how we run our business? How should the values be reflected in the behavior of in structors, custodians, secretaries and admin istrators? What do the values have to say about our programs, the institutional envi ronment?

In other words, like the well-adjusted individual, the well-adjusted organizational personality has clearly defined values and behaves in a manner consistent with those values. Each of these five descriptors of the organizational personality is important. They guide internal and external marketing, budgets, personnel selection and every facet of the operation.

Values Guide Selection, Orientation, Reorientation

Every organization devotes time and resources to the processes of selection and orientation. The successful service industries take added advantage of these already existing investments as an opportunity to inculcate the organizations' values, traditions, and achievements, to establish a common understanding of operations and to foster a common vision of the future. The nuts and bolts of hiring and orientation take second priority to the transmission of the organizational personality. The tone, style, format and content of both the interview and the first few days reflect the values and purposes of the organization. Specifically, the content covers the history and heroes, the scope of the business today and plans (however tentative) for the future. The values and operational guidelines are spelled out, and the company expectations established. Then the new employee is toured through the operation, often by a mentor who will be a resource and a friend during the tough first few days or weeks.

Industry knows that one of its highest turn-over peaks is in the first three months of employment. The same statistic holds true for beginning teachers. The vo-tech schools that place the same honor and value on new students and instructors as do the successful service industries have drastically reduced that statistic. Their people are happier, more productive and project the positive image that the school wants to project. To do otherwise is to leave first impressions up to the grapevine and the naysayers, and first impressions are hard to change. The message must be the one you want to send, and it must come on the first day.

Continual reinforcement not withstanding, a formal reorientation occurs in the "strong image" companies annually, semi-annually, or quarterly, depending on the nature of the business. This regularly scheduled event, whether a meeting or a videotaped presentation, is a part of every employee's work day. Values and the mission statement are highlighted, along with a review of the previous year's achievements, upcoming events, and long-range plans for the future.

The result is that the experienced employee is, like the "new hire" after orientation, reminded that the company knows where it has been, where it is, where it is going, and what it stands for. This builds pride and a sense of security, as well as concrete knowledge that the employee will share with the external market.

People sell their institution if they are proud of it and have the specific facts with which to sell. Obvi-

ous as this seems, many vocational educators do not have a comfortable, speaking knowledge of the "brag facts," the specific achievements and visions of their own programs, let alone their institutions or their state-wide organization. All vocational institutes have recruitment, selection and orientation efforts. With very little additional time or money, these efforts can be modified to help build a positive, consistent internal image for vocational education.

Training Reinforces Image

Like industry, vocational education spends time and money on training. In fact, in the author's experience, education spends more than most industries. The difference, again, between the "strong image" companies and the less successful organizations is that these training experiences are structured to reinforce the values and the mission of the organization. Training is done because it leads toward the mission. In addition, training is undertaken to improve skills in the specific areas addressed by the goals and values. For example, if "courtesy and caring" are organizational values, training classes are held on listening skills, effective feedback and group dynamics. If "teamwork" is a value, classes are held on coaching and effective group planning. Too often, organizations, in both industry and education, say that they care for the consumer, and then they proceed to recruit, select and train for technical skills only. If you value "the human touch," this value must be reflected in every operational systems, including hiring, the reward systems, and training.

Communications: The Ongoing Reminder and the Information Tool for Marketing

The purposes of the organized internal communication programs in the "strong image" companies are three-fold:

1. To reinforce a positive organizational personality, a positive corporate culture,
2. To equip employees with the information they need to do the job, and
3. To give employees "brag facts," the positive achievements of the organization with which they can become a "marketing rep" to the company's external audiences.

These messages are communicated through a variety of media to address the different learning styles represented in any employee group. Media include newsletters, flash bulletins, videotapes, periodic magazines, corporate image productions, bulletin boards, murals and other decor and a host of smaller print and A/V pieces, as well as large group, small group and one-on-one meetings.

All the above, however, can produce little or no results if they are done without adherence to some basic guidelines of communications and principles of learning. Effective internal communication pieces are almost always simple, directed toward one purpose, very attractive visually, targeted (like newspapers) toward a sixth-eight grade reading level with active tense, direct verbiage ... highly informative, entertaining and accurate. Effective internal communications are consistent in style, format and scheduling, and the quality speaks to the value that the organization places on its employees. Finally, all communications, even the signs in the employee break areas, reflect the values and personality of the organization.

It All Gets Back To Values, Mission

If all these strategies sound like they are leading to the same point, the reader is drawing an accurate picture of the secret to maintaining a consistent, positive image. Step One is to identify, clearly and specifically, the values, mission and operational guidelines of the organization. Step Two is to gear all the activities of the organization toward those goals. "All the activities" includes everything ... from the appearance of the grounds to the way visitors are greeted, from the way curriculum is organized and taught to the way all staff members are recognized and rewarded.

Consistency in image requires consistency in management. Internal marketing is not a new wrapper on an old package, so much as a new way of packaging and delivering. All postsecondary vocational employees must "think marketing" and mirror the image of the institution. Their aptitude and inclination to do that depends on the respect and services they receive as one of the key target markets of vocational education.

People tend to do as they are "done unto." If you want the people you directly influence to maintain pride in vocational education, actively share that pride with others and be a "marketing rep" for the institution, then you must see that they have the skills, knowledge and attitude to do that. A positive, consistent image for post-secondary education depends on internal marketing.

(Deede Sharpe's views were written specifically for this publication.)

Structure

Structure in a marketing context refers to providing organizational support and procedures to enable marketing to function and thrive in the educational institution. As Ms. Sharpe indicates, marketing requires consistent support and commitment of all organizational members if it is to be effective. The following activities relate to establishing this important structure.

A full-time marketing position, staffed by a professional with vocational education and marketing experience, is needed to integrate, coordinate and sustain a marketing effort. In some settings, a committee of faculty, staff and administration can assist the position in an ad hoc or permanent basis. However, in the event a marketing committee is established, it is wise to organize a small (5-7 members) committee that can proceed expeditiously.

Program or department contacts must be established so vocational programs and the marketing process can work together and support one another. Marketing cannot be organized or viewed as an "add-on" activity. Marketing must be interwoven throughout all programs because the vocational programs are, in effect, the service the clients are purchasing to satisfy their educational needs.

Training in marketing is an essential component of the integration process. The institution's marketing person can develop and implement fundamental marketing training for the institution's staff, administration and faculty. Also, occasional training sessions by consultants on special topics will probably be necessary. As Ms. Sharpe points out, training must be seen as an on-going effort so new and experienced staff are properly and fully informed.

External marketing activities must be developed and supported. The primary document that details these activities is referred to as a marketing plan. The marketing person at an institution should be responsible for developing this plan and detailing customer segments, market research, promotional activities, program modifications, assessment of educational costs, program availability/accessibility, assessing consumer demand and community relations. This plan should be developed in conjunction with central administration and be evaluated and modified annually.

Management Support

The support of upper management for the marketing process is necessary for the integration of marketing to occur. The institution's director, dean, or president is usually considered to be the primary public relations official for the institution. This person's commitment to marketing sets the tone and pace for the rest of the institution to follow. The role the CEO can perform in marketing is one of leader of the marketing effort. A recent article on the subject identified four primary marketing roles for an institution's president:

1. Symbolic leader - The president must create an environment of positive expectations
2. Financial leader - Dollars and time arereflections of real commitment
3. Organizational leader - Marketing knowledge and management expectation must be enthusiastically transmitted
4. Politlcal leader - When the collegecommu nity is a family, external marketing becomes less d ficult (Johnson, 1986)

The support of top management is clearly essential in providing structure to the marketing process.

SUMMARY

Planners and leaders of post-secondary vocational education must recognize a gap exists between the need for technical training and the service to satisfy the need. This condition exists for a variety of reasons, some of which are controllable and others which are uncontrollable. Although uncontrollable factors typically cannot be changed, they can be influenced and addressed through proper planning. Controllable factors, however, can be monitored and modified at the discretion of vocational education leaders. Marketing is one controllable factor leaders can use to be more responsive to the needs of students, employers, and society. Also, marketing can help to clarify the many misperceptions and misunderstandings that surround vocational education by clearly communicating the philosophy, outcome, and benefits associated with vocational training. However, before any post-secondary vocational education institution can reap the benefits of marketing, marketing must become an integral component of the institution's planning and evaluative efforts. Moreover, the integration of marketing must be performed in a structured fashion by professional personnel with experience in education and marketing. The experiences, views, concepts and activities reported in this monograph are offered in support of this important, timely goal.

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